



GREEK TURKISH FORUM STATEMENT

(19 April 2024)

The Greek Turkish Forum (GTF) members, having met in Gaziantep, Türkiye, on 16-17 April 2024 to discuss recent developments in Greek-Turkish relations, noted with satisfaction the progress achieved since the launching of the positive agenda and the political dialogue in October 2023.

The GTF strongly believes the momentum achieved so far needs to be maintained and furthered with constant high-level attention. In this context, the forthcoming visit of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to Türkiye will be an important opportunity to take a stake of the achievements and provide an impetus for further improvement of the relations. Thus, the GTF members would like to propose the following measures to be taken jointly by the two governments to further the positive agenda.

The two countries should ensure that economic links nurtured through the “Positive Agenda” are sustainable, realistically productive, and remain on course. To be able to do this, the GTF members feel that the promising number of MOUs signed in the context of the positive agenda need to be followed closely and produce tangible results in the foreseeable future. For this, they urge the two governments to set up a Steering Committee to monitor and assist the progress of their application.

The GTF members believe that to create better economic relations, the two countries should mutually enact legal infrastructure about trade agreements, double taxation, mutual promotion, and protection. The members suggest that the discussions on customs cooperation between the two sides should focus, among other things, on customs practices that might unduly burden bilateral exchanges.

In addition, representatives of private sector companies with a high international profile should be encouraged to meet and exchange impressions, evaluations, and information about their experience. The mutual awareness and trust created through such undertakings would lead

to further cooperation. In this context, specific sectors like construction, tourism, transportation, and energy are considered by the GTF members to be the foremost promising areas for economic cooperation between the two countries.

The GTF members further encourage the two countries to add a wider educational dimension to their positive agenda. In this context, an extensive program to exchange students and academic personnel with specific funds provided jointly by the two governments would be essential to support the trust-building between the two peoples.

The GTF members are aware of the possible destructive power of various issues in bilateral relations and urge the two governments to sidestep them for the time being when the more important aspect of the relations should focus on confidence and trust building and creating an environment more conducive to take up the disputed aspects of their relations. In this context, the GTF members recognize the possible disruptive effects of the current dangerous regional security environment and the unresolved Cyprus issue. In this respect, the GTF members welcome the willingness of all sides to support the efforts of the Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Ms. Maria Angela Holguin Cuellar, and hope that they will lead to a process that will address the concerns and aspirations of both communities on the Island, ensuring political equality, security, and mutual respect.

Finally, the GTF members thank Ms. Fatma Şahin, Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality of Gaziantep, for her kind invitation and generous hospitality. GTF suggests that the twinning of Gaziantep and Thessaloniki cities will be an important step in bringing together the people of the two cities, with broader implications for furthering friendship between the two countries.